

How do I prepare my child for a new sibling?

The arrival of a new baby can cause lots of sudden changes in your family that are difficult for older children to handle. While pregnant, parents tend to spend a large amount of their time preparing for the newborn and after their birth, the majority of attention is focused on tending to the newborn's needs. It's not uncommon for your older child to resent this attention and act out as a result. By discussing the pregnancy and including your child in the process of preparing and caring for the infant, this adjustment may become easier.

Parents should inform children about their new sibling while they are pregnant. The sooner the better as this allows for more adjustment time. As your due date draws nearer, it's a good idea to make arrangements for your child and explain to them who will be caring for them while mom and dad are at the hospital. It's helpful to include your child in the daily activities surrounding the newborn so that he or she does not feel left out. Allowing your child to help provides them with a sense of inclusion and importance. It also provides them with time to interact positively with your infant.

Despite your now chaotic schedule, it's important that you continue to spend one on one time with your child. If your child knows that parents have set aside time just for them, this may reduce some of the resentment that sometimes is associated with a new baby. Remember, this adjustment may take time, so be patient.